

Illinois Early Learning Council

April 29, 2005

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

160 N. LaSalle, Bilandic Building, Room N-502, Chicago

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ann Alvarez, Roseanna Ander, Martha Arntson, Lori Baas, Tim Carpenter (for Mark Donahue), Martina Casey, Vinni Hall, Kay Henderson, Judy Johnson, Janet Maruna, Samuel Meisels, Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Elliot Regenstein, Linda Saterfield (for Carol Adams), Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Luz Maria Solis, Jerry Stermer, Judy Walker Kendrick, Maria Whelan

Absent: Ellen Alberding, Guy Alongi, Gayla Boomer, Barbara Bowman (for Arne Duncan), Constance Brown, Ellen Collins Bush (for Wanda Newell), Mary Ellen Caron, Representative Elizabeth Coulson, George Davis, Claudia Fabian, Marilu Galan, Phyllis Glink, Representative Deborah Graham, Senator Don Harmon, Richard Jones, James Kaplan, Lanita Koster, Barry Maram, Cordelia Meyer, Cynthia Moreno (for Bryan Samuels), Louanner Peters, Claudia Quigg, Senator Carol Ronen, Adele Simmons, Leo Smith, Eric Whitaker, Katie Williams (for Joyce Thomas)

- **Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 11:19 a.m. by Harriet Meyer.

- **Adoption of Minutes**

Harriet Meyer asked that the Council approve minutes from the previous meeting. Martha Arntson moved to adopt the December 6, 2004 Early Learning Council meeting minutes. Maria Whelan seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

- **Results of Council's Preschool For All priority components Survey**

Margie Wallen reported that 62 percent of Early Learning Council members responded to the Preschool For All component priority survey. She provided a summary of the items as prioritized by the members, and highlighted the two components that were ranked as most important: the recommendation regarding lead teacher qualifications and the recommendation regarding program administrator qualifications. She referred members to the summary hand out in the meeting packet. Elliot Regenstein reminded the Council that the survey was conducted to provide a sense of the highest priority components in case legislators suggest phasing in Preschool For All over time, and not to diminish the importance of individual recommendations or the plan as a whole.

- **Preschool For All Draft Plan Update**

Harriet reported that all members have been sent review forms and the draft written plan for Preschool For All. She asked members to please send their comments by Friday, May 6, 2005. She encouraged all members to continue to build public support for early childhood programs. She reported that the Governor included the final \$30 million installment of his \$90 million commitment to early childhood education as part of his budget request, and that it is included in the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) budget as well. She cautioned, however, that the General Assembly will make the final decision on appropriations, and asked all members to lend their voice in support of expanded funding for early childhood education.

- **ISBE's Strategic Plan**

Elliot Regenstein mentioned that the ISBE strategic plan does not include early childhood as a separate item because it is linked so closely with so many other issues (literacy, for example). He reminded Early Learning Council (ELC) members of the importance of talking to ISBE members and attending their forums on priorities and the strategic plan. Dr. Vinni Hall offered to make copies of the ISBE strategic plan available to the Early Learning Council co-chairs so that they can distribute them to Council members.

- **Improving the Effectiveness of Council Meetings and 2005 Priorities**

Elliot Regenstein spoke about the need to use meetings to drive the Council's agenda. He proposed that committee work be used to develop detailed recommendations, and that Council meetings be the place for reports, updates, and dialogue. He suggested that items presented to the Council that are in need of further work be sent back to committees for detailed discussion. In each meeting, the Council will look at recommendations that will enable programs to ready themselves for Preschool For All. He continued by saying that as the Council works through the next year, members will work together to promote the Preschool For All agenda. Elliot then reviewed the Council Recommendations Action Report included in the meeting packet. The document will be used to guide discussion around recommendations and follow up at this and all subsequent Early Learning Council meetings.

- **Recommendations Action Report: Follow up on Council Recommendations to Date**

Elliot Regenstein asked for Council members to provide updates on the items listed on the action report.

- **RECOMMENDATION: ISBE should prioritize FY05 Early Childhood Block Grant expansion funding to communities with a high proportion of children who are unserved & at risk, in coordination with other state & federal agencies and private organizations. Targeted outreach should be provided to these communities.**
ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Kay Henderson summarized FY05 ECBG awards, and described many programs that received funding during this fiscal year. Harriet Meyer requested a written summary of the information Kay provided verbally at this meeting; Kay agreed to provide it for Council members. (See Attachments – page 7).

- RECOMMENDATION:** The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) should move forward to implement two recommendations of the IDHS Child Care Strategic Plan: a) Provide technical assistance and training to child care programs and providers to help them understand and implement programs with blended funding.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Linda Saterfield reported that, due to staff shortages, the amount of training the office can do is limited. Current staff are being cross-trained to provide training on blended funding streams.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Expand the Special Needs Add-On Rate Reimbursement program to cover all child care providers in order to increase access to quality child care for children with disabilities so that they can be cared for in inclusive settings.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Linda Saterfield reported that because of the cost associated with this item, no further action has been taken to implement this recommendation. She reported that a process and forms were piloted but the program changes will not be implemented without new funding.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Enhance the quality & stability of approved collaboration programs under the Child Care Collaboration Program by disbursing child care funding through an upfront funding mechanism rather than through monthly fee-for-service reimbursement.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Linda Saterfield responded that money cannot be advanced to child care providers because of the combined use of federal and state funds. She stated that many collaboration programs are using certificates, and are not contractual programs. She added that many programs under contract have fewer than 25 percent of their total children served in collaboration programs. Maria Whelan commented that the Head Start structure creates large barriers to blending funding with child care programs. She commented that she is not in favor of advancing funds to child care programs. Linda responded that child care payments are based on per diem reimbursements for direct services. Payment is provided based on the number of children served and the number of days each child attended the program. Judy Walker Kendrick stated that this recommendation was aimed at site providers because of cash flow problems they have experienced based on slow payments. Judy remarked that the payment lag time has improved, and suggested that concentrating on timely payments would advance the spirit of this recommendation. She also commented that she believed that other federally funded programs are able to advance payments, and suggested looking into that issue further. Linda reported that a web-based system of electronic payments, forms and bills (to begin in 2006) should help to speed payments to providers. Elliot Regenstein suggested that this recommendation be sent back to the Linkage and Integration Committee for further work, and asked that that committee provide an update at the next Council meeting.
- RECOMMENDATION:** State and federal funding agencies (IDHS, ISBE, Department of Children and Family Services, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region V) should identify opportunities for working in teams and

sharing information, forms, etc. to reduce duplicative program & fiscal monitoring & auditing site visits and paperwork.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Margie Wallen stated that this recommendation originated in the Linkage and Integration Committee, and that no work has been completed on this yet. Linda Saterfield commented that federal program reporting cannot be changed. She stated that she has attempted to reduce reporting for Child Care programs by requiring only monthly billing instead of monthly reports. Margie added that this recommendation came from providers who were concerned about the number of program audits and reports they must complete. She asked if it is possible to share information among auditing/monitoring bodies. Linda responded that IDHS has attempted to consolidate their monitoring so only one DHS auditor visits each program. She doubted that separate state agencies could consolidate monitoring because of accountability of funding issues. Kay Henderson offered that ISBE external audit teams examine all common grants when they make a monitoring visit. She went on to provide an example of sharing data (using the Cornerstone System) between DHS and Early Intervention (EI) to aid in transitions from EI to Special Education Part B programs. She offered this as a precedent of data sharing between agencies. Linda stated that Child Care may be able to use a unique identifier for each child to enable this kind of monitoring, as EI is going to do. Judy Walker Kendrick reminded the group of the difficulty multiple monitoring visits creates for providers, and encouraged the Council to continue to keep this on the agenda. Elliot Regenstein responded that the Linkage and Integration committee can work on moving this issue forward. Nancy Shier reported that the Government Interagency Team of the Birth To Five Project is also working on this issue regarding how it affects birth to three programs.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** IDHS' Child Care Assistance Program should develop a pilot project in a wide variety of communities (suburban, rural, urban) that gives parents who work and/or attend school full-time during non-traditional hours the option of selecting full-time care during traditional daytime business hours (Parents who make this voluntary choice would pay privately for additional care needed during the hours they work or are in school). Any evaluation of the pilot should consider quality and stability of care accessed in addition to the fiscal impact. Parents should be adequately informed of their options.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Linda Saterfield reported that there are some costs associated with this recommendation, but that the IDHS Child Care Advisory Committee has reviewed draft procedures and provided input into the plans. Pilots are planned to begin with two Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies, and then move to four site providers. Elliot Regenstein asked that she report on progress at the next Council meeting.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Encourage and support a collaboration conference on community collaboration and program collaboration (blended funding models) to be sponsored by IDHS and ISBE. Ensure that information about existing program collaboration as well as community collaborations is made widely available (e.g. database, mentoring process) so that other communities can apply lessons learned.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Kay Henderson stated that IDHS and ISBE are co-sponsoring a pre-conference session at the Sharing A Vision conference on October 19, 2005. The session will focus on collaboration among programs, and feature programs that are currently part of successful collaborations. A round-table discussion session will enable interested parties to ask questions of collaboration program representatives. Kay reported that to respond to the recommendation that information about existing collaborations be made widely available, ISBE participated in a conference funded by a mini-grant from the Collaboration Office. She suggested that an RFP be developed so that other collaboration conferences can be replicated around the state. Roseanna Ander suggested inviting a Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) representative to speak to provide a national perspective. Elliot Regenstein asked that an update be provided at the next Council meeting.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Council members affirmed the importance of proposed child care rate recommendations. Numerous members stated that the plan to raise child care rates and to implement a tiered reimbursement system that provides financial incentives for higher quality services should be adopted as a critical step toward improving a family's access to – and the quality of – early care and education. In addition, coordinated planning and implementation between Preschool For All and child care programs would increase access and alignment in service quality in all settings.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: Linda Saterfield reported that this recommendation cannot be implemented without new funding. The total cost of the proposal is \$92 million.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Effective program planning activities require complete and current information. Funding decisions should be based on the most up-to-date information about current services and service gaps. To support planning and collaboration between state and community-based agencies, a mechanism for information exchange (website or other forms) should be accessible and regularly updated, including descriptions of and contact information for current collaboration models and links to census and other community needs/assets information. State agencies should also review this information as a part of RFP review processes and other resource allocation processes in the RFP review process to ensure that applicants are not proposing to provide duplicative or competing services. Steps should be taken to identify a lead agency to maintain and regularly update a web-based Geographic Information System based on existing systems and information.

ACTION STEPS/RESULTS TO DATE: See report below regarding creating a data-driven framework to guide allocations to early childhood programs in Illinois.

- **Criteria for Potential FY06 Capacity-building Grant in High Need, Under-resourced Communities**

Harriet Meyer reported that last year the recommendation was made to set aside funds for capacity building to expand PreKindergarten and Birth to Three programs in high-need communities. Recently, Eamon Kelly, ISBE Chief of Staff, asked the Early Learning Council to recommend activities and funding recommendations regarding capacity building in high need, under-resourced communities. A small group met by conference call to develop ideas in response to his request. She asked for Maria Whelan and Kay Henderson to report on that meeting, so that the Council can work toward developing recommendations to move this issue forward. She reiterated that the goal of this work group is to provide more spaces for children in early childhood programs in communities where the need is great, and referred members to the handout in the meeting packet that summarizes the recommendations created by the group.

Maria Whelan stated that she felt there is a need for more discussion around this issue. She stated that a flexible community building line exists in the current RFP for Early Childhood Block Grant funding. Maria reported she would like to discuss barriers to childrens' and families' access to preschool programs. She stated that a barrier to serving children through these types of capacity building dollars is that the majority of children in poverty receive care through license-exempt family, friend, and neighbor care. Maria recommended that funding be put aside for capacity-building grants, but that a work group decide what issues and barriers to address before making funding decisions. Harriet asked whether this might represent two different conversations: one discussion about capacity in communities, and one about barriers to accessing services. Jerry Stermer responded that this discussion should take place concurrent to the Council recommending that funding be set aside to assist intermediary agencies with providing technical assistance to entities in high need areas in order to assist their submission of RFPs for program models that will meet the needs of the families and children of that community. Judy Walker Kendrick suggested that a six month planning window might not be enough time for programs to find space, become licensed, etc. Jan Maruna offered that, although this is true in some areas, other areas may be ready to move forward but do not have the capacity to write a grant proposal. Sue Logan agreed, and stated that the Council needs to include in the recommendation ways to establish more support for providers to understand and put together RFPs. Vinnie Hall summarized that both planning for and finding physical space for programs, and ways to provide technical assistance to programs to assist in funding proposal writing must be addressed. Jerry Stermer moved that, with the addition of addressing barriers to access and the other issues brought up in this discussion, the recommendations as written be approved. Judy Walker Kendrick seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

- **A Proposal for Consideration: Developing a Data-driven Framework to Ensure Access to Early Childhood Services in Illinois Communities**

Harriet Meyer reported that out of the desire to allocate resources efficiently, and through the recommendation of the Linkage and Integration Committee, recommendations have been made to create a transparent, data-driven framework to guide statewide allocation of early childhood resources. She stated that many tools currently exist to provide data on early childhood programs, but that there is no single repository of early childhood information for the state.

The proposal for a data-driven framework includes convening a work group of stakeholders to determine data needs, compiling data and creating a web-based system wherein programs and agencies can use it to better understand the resources and need in communities around the state, and developing a process for creating asset maps. Judy Walker Kendrick moved that this proposal be moved forward, and Jerry Stermer seconded it. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- **Next Steps**

Elliot Regenstein reported to members that the Early Learning Council website is now online. He encouraged members to submit content for the website to the Council for preliminary review and approval, subject to approval by the Governor's Office.

Harriet Meyer encouraged all committees to convene and work on those recommendations that can be moved forward in advance of Preschool For All.

- **Adjournment**

Harriet Meyer adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

- **Upcoming Early Learning Council Meetings:**

Monday, November 14, 2005, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Later changed to October 3, 2005, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Approved by the Illinois Early Learning Council
October 3, 2005

ATTACHMENTS

FY05 Innovative Models Early Childhood Block Grant

Waukegan CUSD #60

Community-collaboration to serve 3 year olds in PreK. Classrooms are located in community agencies (North Shore Church, YWCA, AAUW Preschool) as well as school buildings. This group is also expanding 0-3 services.

Southern Seven Health Department/ Head Start-

Collaboration between Head Start grantee and 29 school districts in this seven county region.

Lessie Bates Neighborhood House, East St. Louis

Parent Educator in Child Care Center

Mental Health Center of Champaign County,

**Lessie Bates Neighborhood House, East St. Louis,
Community Child Care and Service Center, Jacksonville**
Birth to Three Fatherhood initiatives

Aurora East and Aurora West School Districts

Joint district, community-wide screening for early childhood services

Lee's Child Care, Broadview

PreK and PT 0-3 in child care in very high need area

Child Care Network of Evanston

Certified teachers in centers across the city

Virden School District/Care-o-sel Child Care

Itinerant certified teacher working with children/providers in family child care homes

Stephenson County ROE, Henry Booth House, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Doula services

Indian Prairie SD, Naperville and Plainfield SD

Early Childhood blended classrooms include children who are funded through PreK, IDEA, and parent tuition

Early Learning Quad Cities

A collaboration between the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education, University of Illinois Extension, East Moline SD, Moline SD, Head Start, and five Child Care Centers

providing PreK and parent education services to eligible children/families in a variety of settings and professional development and technical assistance for providers

Recommendation: Developing a Data-Driven Framework to Ensure Access to Early Childhood Services in Illinois Communities

Problem Statement. Illinois has many early childhood programs that offer a range of services to a variety of families. Numerous tools exist to assess community needs and availability of services for pregnant women and families with young children in a geographical context. These include:

- the *Illinois Geographic Information System* website that facilitates comparisons of demographic early childhood data to analyze community needs and availability of services (<http://map1.gismap.us/chicago/>);
- the *Illinois Facilities Fund's Moving Towards A System* 2002 comprehensive statewide needs assessment of early care and education in Illinois communities (<http://www.iff.org/content.cfm?contentid=41>);
- the *Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services Child Care Supply and Demand website* that presents up-to-date information about early care and education programs for low-income children, as well as community conditions, assets and needs for all Chicago community areas (<http://dcys-ccsd.chapinhall.org/index.html>); and
- the *Illinois Head Start Association* website that provides Illinois Head Start Grantee profiles, including 2002 program, child, and family data (<http://www.ilheadstart.org/map.html>)

However, Illinois does not have a transparent, data-driven framework to guide the statewide allocation of early childhood resources to ensure that funds are used most efficiently to meet the needs of families with young children. For example, preschool programs remain unevenly distributed relative to need; with the last two installments of \$30 million each in Early Childhood Block Grant funds, we have come close to saturation in meeting the need for Prekindergarten and Head Start programs serving children at-risk of school failure in some communities, but may still offer little access to these services in other communities.

Proposed Activities. The role of the Illinois Early Learning Council is to develop a high-quality early learning system available to all children under age five by engaging in collaborative planning across programs, divisions and agencies at the state level.

1. We propose that the Council convene a workgroup of experts to complete some immediate short-term activities, in collaboration with Illinois State Board of Education and the Chicago Public Schools, which would add value to the FY06 Early Childhood Block Grant resource allocation process. This includes analyzing the availability of existing PreK and Head Start services in the context of community needs to identify high-need, under-resourced communities.

2. In the mid-term, the workgroup would work on compiling data, preferably using a web-based mapping system that could be manipulated by users for a variety of purposes and at a range of geographic levels of analysis, to describe where 0-5 early childhood services are, the need for services by community (e.g. demographics and other indicators of need), and gaps between assets and needs. This would allow stakeholders to better understand the current service system, as well as how and where we need to grow different types of quality programs in the future. State and local agencies could review this information as a part of RFP review and other resource allocation processes. A written report by the Council could also be produced summarizing this information.
3. In the mid-to long-term, a Facilities Workgroup could be convened to develop a process for creating asset maps that identify the number, size, quality and condition of facilities to help guide decisions about where services could be located (e.g. schools don't need to add or re-program classrooms if they exist in a nearby community-based organization, and vice versa).

Desired Results:

- ✓ Basic data on early childhood (birth to 5) programs administered by multiple state and federal agencies as well as comparative community demographic is readily available - preferably through a web-based mapping system that can be manipulated by users for a variety of purposes and at a range of geographic levels of analysis - to assist in:
 - locating birth to five program data by different geographic units of analysis
 - assessing the availability of services for pregnant women and families with children under age five in a geographical context, the need for services by community (e.g. demographics and other indicators of need), and gaps between current service levels and needs
 - informing program planning and funding processes (e.g. identifying underserved areas, areas of potential duplication);
 - raising awareness of available programs among community stakeholders; and
 - improving collaboration at the local level by providing a consistent source of information on programs and services available in a community
- ✓ More “transparent” decision-making frameworks for awarding new funding involving program administrators across agencies are developed so that resources are used most efficiently and the goal of creating a comprehensive early childhood system is advanced.
- ✓ Data on early childhood (birth to 5) programs and community needs is used consistently by federal, state and local government agencies to inform resource allocation processes in Illinois.

Recommendation for Building Capacity for Prekindergarten and 0-3 Services in High Need, Under-Resourced Communities

Background: In April 2004, the Council recommended that ISBE set aside some Early Childhood Block Grant funds to assist high-need, under-resourced communities to build capacity to offer PreK and 0-3 programs to families with young children. As ISBE gets ready to allocate potential new Block Grant funds in FY06, Interim Chief of Staff Eamon Kelly asked the Council to recommend what sorts of activities might be supported to help build capacity in high-need communities, as well as how much funding should be allocated for this purpose.

The Executive Committee recommended that a small group of Council members meet to develop ideas for discussion with the full Council. The recommendations below were developed by Claudia Fabian, Jan Maruna, Harriet Meyer, Jerry Stermer, Maria Whelan, and Luz Maria Solis, as well as Kay Henderson and Margie Wallen.

Next Steps

- Define the terms “high need” and “under-resourced” in order to identify the highest priority communities in need of PreK and/or 0-3 services

1. What types of activities might ISBE support to assist high-need, under-resourced communities to set up and begin offering PreK programs and/or research-based 0-3 services in FY06?

- Clearly state outcome of capacity building activities as children will be served in classrooms meeting ISBE’s PreK program standards and/or 0-3 program guidelines by January 2006, although flexibility in timeframes may be negotiated.
- Planning must result in actual spaces for children in PreK and/or 0-3 programs and services must begin in FY06. However, efforts should be made to bring all community partners to the table and to build relationships between potential partners.
- Capacity-building or “jumpstart” activities might include:
 - Identifying barriers to participation, e.g. transportation, parents’ work schedules, lack of adequate facilities, etc.
 - Identifying community assets, potential partners, organizational capacities
 - Technical assistance to design programs based on standards, logic models and community needs
 - Technical assistance with facilities, licensing, etc.
 - Program implementation efforts, such as setting up transportation, screening procedures, supervision structures, staff recruitment and orientation, planning for professional development, program marketing & outreach strategies, purchasing equipment and supplies, determining curriculum and assessment, establishing written linkage agreements with community partners, etc.

2. How might these grants be structured?

- Fund “intermediary” organizations and/or individuals who have actual experience in program design and implementation to help communities set up and implement programs over a 6- month period. ISBE should stipulate what qualifications are needed to effectively complete the work.
- Cover expenses related to community efforts, e.g. transportation to meetings, staff time if necessary.
- Use current data from ISBE to inform costs related to new programs, e.g. equipping classrooms, approximate operating costs per child and to guide budgeting for program design and implementation
- Research the possibility of using the FY06 Block Grant RFP budget forms (community services line) to cover capacity-building activities related to designing and implementing early childhood programs

3. About how many grants should be made available? How much funding should be allocated for this purpose?

- Start small with 5-10 high-need communities. Recommend a percent of total new funds be set aside for this purpose. For instance, if \$30 M in new funding is appropriated for FY06 and 5% is set aside to open programs in high-need communities, \$1.5 million would be available for this purpose.

Recommendation to the Illinois State Board of Education from the Illinois Early Learning Council

**Expanding Prekindergarten and 0-3 Services in
High Need, Under-Resourced Communities through Capacity Building Activities**

Background: In April 2004, the Council recommended that ISBE set aside some Early Childhood Block Grant funds to assist high-need, under-resourced communities to build capacity to offer PreK and 0-3 programs to families with young children. With the significant growth in Block Grant funds over the past two years, Council members want to ensure that resources are distributed relative to need in order to reach all young children at-risk of school failure whose families choose to participate. For example, there were 3,979 children potentially eligible for PreK in Lake County in FY04 and 1,623 PreK spaces. Thus, Lake County has a service level of 41% and a service gap of 2,356.

As the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) prepares to allocate potential new Block Grant funds in FY06, the Council would appreciate consideration of the recommendation described below to support activities that lead to new Prekindergarten (PreK) and Birth to Three (0-3) services being offered in FY06 in high-need communities that have do not have enough resources relative to need.

Recommendation: The Illinois Early Learning Council recommends that three percent of new FY06 Early Childhood Block Grant funds be allocated through a targeted RFP process to support new PreK and 0-3 programs in 5-10 targeted high-need communities that are implemented as a result of capacity building activities.

Process for identifying high-need, under-resourced communities: A workgroup of Council members has worked with Kay Henderson, ISBE's Division of Early Childhood Education Administrator, to develop a process for identifying communities with high levels of need and few or no early childhood resources or those where the need dwarfs the ability of existing providers to meet the demand. Target communities can be identified by mid-June.

Request for Proposals content and process: The Council recommends that a separate RFP, based substantially on the current Block Grant RFP and specifically targeted to expand PreK and 0-3 services in 5-10 targeted communities, be disseminated to fund capacity building activities and actual new services to children and families by no later than the last quarter of FY06.

- Eligible applicants should include service providers and "intermediary" organizations and/or individuals who have a track record of expertise in early childhood program design and implementation, technical assistance provision, and collaboration efforts in order to help communities set up and implement programs.

- Applicants should also demonstrate how they intend to meaningfully involve a broad cross-section of community partners that are reflective of families with young children residing in the target communities, as well as how they will address cultural competency.
- Capacity-building activities might include:
 - Identifying barriers to participation, e.g. transportation, parents' work schedules, lack of adequate facilities, etc.
 - Identifying community assets, potential partners, organizational capacities
 - Technical assistance to design programs based on standards, logic models and community needs and with facilities, licensing, etc.
 - Community planning efforts that bring all community partners to the table to build relationships and service linkages between potential partners.
 - Program implementation efforts, such as setting up transportation, screening procedures, supervision structures, staff recruitment and orientation, planning for professional development, program marketing and outreach strategies, purchasing equipment and supplies, determining curriculum and assessment, establishing written linkage agreements with community partners, etc.